or industrially regarded to



Continued from Last Sanday.

CHAPTER III.

Of the great discovery in Sylvan Silver Bollow it would seem that Collinson as yet knew nothing. In spite of Kay's fears that he might stray there on his return from Skinner's, he did not, nor did he afterward, recisit the locality. Neither the news of the registry of the claim nor the arrival of Key's workmen ever reached him. The few travelers who passed his mill came from the valley to cross the Divide on their way to Skinner's, and returned by the longer but easier detour of the stage road over Galleper's Ridge. He had no chance to par-ticipate in the prosperity that flowed from the opening of the mine which pleutifully besprin-kled Skinner's settlement; he was too far away to profit even by the chance custom of Key's Satharth wandering workmen. His isolation from civilization—for those win came to him from the valley were rade Western emigrants like himself-remaine undisturbed. The return of the prospect-ing party to his humble hospitality that night had been an exceptional case; in his characteristic simplicity be did not dream that it was because they had nowhere che to go in their penniless condition. It was incident to be pleasantly remembered, but whose non-recurrence did not disturb his infinite patience. His park tarrel and flour sack had been replenished by other travelers; his own wants were few.

It was a day or two after the midlight vont of the sheriff to Silver Hollow that Key galloped down the steep grade to Collinson's. He was amused-albeit, in his new importance, a little aggrieved also-to find that as usual Collinson had con bounded his descent with that of the gener nily detached boulder, and that le obcared to add his voice to the general up This brought Collinson to his door.

"I've had your hose hobbled our among chickweed and clover in the green pas rare back o' the mill, and he's picked up that much that he's lookin' fat and sassy, he said quietly, beginning mechanically custran Key's beadle, even while his guest was in the aut of dismounting. "His back's quite healed up."

Key could not restrain a shrug of mapa-It was three weeks since they had men; three weeks crammed with excite-ment, carriery, achievement and fortune to Key, and yet this pin c and this man were as stapidly unchanged as when he had left them. A momentary funcy that this was the reality—thin he binaself was only a wakening from some detucted dream over film. But Collinson's next words were

I reckened that maybe you'd write from Marysville to Sciener to send for the hose and forward turn to ye, for I never halfinsied would come hack.

It was quite plain from this that Collinson and neard nothing. But it was also awaward, as Key would now have to tell the whole story and reveal the fact that he had seen really experimenting when Collinson overious him in the hollow. He evaded this by post-disting his discovery of the richies of the ore give he had reached Marysville But he found some difficulty in recogniting beaster, he had no desire to impresse the sine on with the percentation, nor the undamned energy to had displayed in getting up the company and spessing the mine, so that he was actually embarrassed by his lown understationent, and under the grave, pu tient eyes of his companion, told his story at hest lamely, Collinson's face betrayer pentier proband interest nor the slightes ent. When he had ended his awa ward recital Collinson said showly Then Uncle Dick and that other Parket

feller ain't got no stow in this yer fine "No," said Key quickly. "Bon't yet that morning and went off our own ways? You don't suppose," he added with a forced half lough, "that if Uncle lock or Parker had struck a lead after they left me they'd have put me in it?"
"Worldn't they?" asked Collinson,

gravely. course not." He laughed a little more minurally, but presently added, with no onemsy smile "What makes you think they would?"

"Nothing?" said Collinson promptly. Nevertheless, when they were seated

before the fire. With plasses in their hands, allows returned patiently to the subject.
"You was saying they west their way and you went yours. But your way was back on the old way that you'd gone to-

But Key felt himself on firmer ground here, and answered deliberately and trutt fully, "Yes, but I only went back to the hollow to satisfy myself if there really house there, and if there was to warn the occupants of the approaching

"And there was a house there," said Collin son thoughtfully. "Only the mins." Hestopped and flushed

quickly, for he remembered that he had denied its existence at their former meeting. "That is," he went on hurriedly, "I found out from the sheriff, you know, that these bad been a house there. But," be added, reverting to his stronger position, "my going back there was an accident, and my picking up the outcrop was an accident—and had no more to do with our partnership pros-pecting than you had. In fact," he added, with a reasouring laugh, "you'd have had a better right to share in my claim, coming there as you did at that moment, than they. Why, if I'd have known what the thing was wanted capital and some experience." cuse, it had only just occurred to him, and glanced affolds at Collinson. But that gentleman said soberly:

you wouldn't muther." Why not?" said Key, half angrily. Collinson paused. After a moment he

said: "Cos I wouldn't hev took any-thing outer that place." Key felt relieved. From what he knew Collinson's vagaries he believed him-He was wise in not admitting him to his confidences at the beginning. He might

have thought it his duty to tell others. "I'm not so particular," he returned, laughingly, "but the silver in that hole was never touched, nor, I dare say, even imagand, by mortal man before there is something else about the hellow that I want to tell you. You remember the

supper that you picked up?" Yes. "Well, I lied to you about that; I never dropped it. On the contrary, I had picked hundred feet, still upright and standin'.

up the mate of it very near where you found ed. For I don't mind telling you now, Collinson, that I believe there was a eman in that bouse, and the same woman I saw whose face I saw at the window. remember how the boys joked me about it-well, perhaps. I didn't care that you should laugh at me, too, but I've had a sore conscience over my lie, for I remembered that you seemed to have some interest in the matter, too. and I thought that maybe I might have thrown you off the It seemed to me that if you had any idea who it was, we might now talk the matter over and compare notes. I superstitious thrill as he gazed at him. think you said—at least, I gathered the idea. After a pause Collinson resumed: "I heard from a remark of yours," he added hastily, | a month after that she had died about that | was diagonally opposite that occupied by | "No, the orator."

as he remembered that the suggestion was his own, and a satisfical one-"that it reminded you of your wife's slipper. Of course, as your wife is dead, that would

" he stopped.

nblance, unless—" he s "Have you got 'em yet?" "Yes, both." He took them from the

offer no clue, and can only be a chance re

pocket of his riding Jacket. As Collinson received them, his face took men itself an ever graver expression it's mighty car'ous," be said reflectively but looking at the two of 'on the like-ness is more fetchin'. Ye see, my wife had a straight foot, and never wore reglar rights and lefts like other women, but Linder changed about; we see, there thors is reg'lar rights and lefts, but never was a ma elebi. There may be other women as peculiar,"

reested Key. There must be," said Collinson, quietly

For an instant Key was touched with the manly sincerity of the reply for remembering Unite Dick's scandal, it had occurred to him that the miktown tenant of the robber's den might be Collinson's wife. went on more confidently;

"So, you see, this woman was undoubtedly in that house on the night of the fire. She escaped, and in a mighty hurry, too, for he had not time to change her slippers for hoes, she escaped on horseback, for har is how she lost them. Now what was be doing there with those rascals, for the

e I saw looked as innocent as a saint's." Seemed to ye sort o' contrairy, jist as I echonical my wife's foot would have looked in a slipper that you said was give to ye. aggested Collinson pointedly, but with no uplication of represent in his voice. Yes," said Key impatiently.

I've read yarm afore now about them Everalian brigands stealin' women," said dimson reflectively, "but that ain't Calfornia road agent style. Great Scott one even so timeli as spoke to a woman they'd have been wiped outer the State long ago. Not the woman as was there, care there to stay?"

As Key's face did not seem to express other assent or satisfaction at this last ent. Collinson, after a glunce at it, went'on with a somewhat gentler gravity.
"I see wat's troublin' you, Mr. Key; you've meta tiev' but the better for a bit o' that orim' that you discovered under the very pot where them slippers of ners had often You're thinkin' that melabe it might er' turned her and her man from their evil

Mr. Key had been thinking nothing of the and, but for some obscure reason the scep had peer that had risen to his lips remained usuid. He rese impatiently, "Well, there thing mow; the house is burned, the gang dispersed, and she has probably gone with He passed, and then hald three or four large gold pieces on the table. "It's or that and hell of our party, Collinson," he

said. when you come over to the mine nd I suppose you will give us a call, you can horse. Meanwhile, you can use or lifted he's a little quicker than the How is business?" he added, with a tory glance around the vacant room and dustry bar.

"That am't much passin' this way," ways strapped when they come here."

Key smiled as he observed that Collin-

you are rather out of the world here. Indeed, I had an alea at first of buying steam power to get out timber for our new away from the wagon road that we couldn't

ected my wife out from the States, and calkthate to keep it in memory of her."

"But con never told us, by the way, how you ver came to put up a mill here with such

an uncertain water supply."
"It wasn't obsartin when I came here,
Mr Key; it was a full-fed stream straight from them snow peaks. It was the earth-quake did it."

"The earthquake!" repeated Key.
"Yes. Ef the earthquake kin heave up that silver-bearing rock that you told us about the first day you kem here, and that you found t'elber day, it could play roots with a mere millstream, I reckon." "But the convulsion I spoke of happened ages on ages ago, when this whole mountain range was being fashioned," said Key

with a laugh.

"Well, this yer earthquake was ten years remember it. It was a queer sort o'day n the fall, dry and bot, as if thar might hey bin a fire in the woods, only there wasn't no wind. Not a breath of air any-The leaves of them alders hung whar. straight as a plumb line. Except for that thar stream and that that wheel, nothin' I might have put you in-only it moved. Thar wasn't a bird on the wing over that canon; thar wasn't a was glad that be had pitched upon that ex- | skirn iship' in the bull wood; even the lizards in the rocks stiffened like stone Chinese idols. It kept gettin' quieter and quieter out if I walked out on that ledge and felt as if I'd have to give a vell just to hear my own voice. Thar was a thin yell over everything, and betwist and between every thing, and the sun was rooted in the middle of it as if it couldn't move peither. Everythin' seemed to be waitin', waitin', waitin' Then all of a sudden suthin' seemed to give somewhar! Sathin' fetched away with a queer sort of rumblin', as if the peg had slipped outer creation. I looked up and knikliated to see half a dozen of boulders come, lickity switch, down the grade. But, darn my skin if one of 'em stirred, and yet while I was lookin' the whole face o' that bieff bowed over softly, as if saying 'good-bye,' and got clean away somewhat before I knowed it. Why, you see that pile agin the side o' the canon! Well, a thousand feet under that there's trees, three You know how them places over on that ours, and I wanted to know to whom it far mountain side always seem to be climbin' up, up, up, over each heads to the very top? Well, Mr. Key, 'em climbin'! And when I palled You myself together and got back to the mill everything was quiet, and so was the mill wheel, and there wasn't two inches of

> "And what did you think of it?" said Key, interested in spite of his impatience. "I thought, Mr. Key-. No, I musn't say I thought, for I knowed it. I knowed that suthin' had happened to my wife! Key did not smile, but even felt a faint

water in the river!"

time o' yaller fever in Texas with the party she was comin' with. Her folks wrote that they died like flies, and wuz all buried together, unbeknownst and promiseuous, and thar wasn't no remains. She slipped away from melike that bluff on that river, and that was the end of it."
"But she might have escaped," said

Key, quickly forgetting himself in his eager-

But Collinson only shook his head. "Then she'd have been here," he said, gravely. Key moved toward the door still abstract. edly, held out his hand, shook his compan-ion's warmly, and, saying he would saddle his horse himself, departed. A sense of disappointment, in which a vague dissatis faction with himself was mingled, was all that had come of his interview. He took nimself severely to task for following his romantic quest so far. It was unworthy of the president of the Sylvan Silver Hollow Company, and he was not quite sure but that his confidences with Collinson might have imperiled even the interests of the ompany. To atone for this momentary abercation and correct his dismal fancies he resolved to attend to some business at Skinner's before returning, and branched off on a long detour that would intersect the traveled stage road. But here a singular incident overtook him. As he wheeled into the turnpike he heard the trampling hoof-beats and jingling harness of the on-coming coach behind him. He had barely time to draw up against the bank before he six galloping horses and swinging vehide swept heavily by. He had a quick horsehide, the reck of varnish and leather, and the momentary vision of a female fac ilhouetted against the glass window of the oach! But even in that flash of perception was glad to be relieved on that point and | he recognized the profile that he had seen at the window of the posterious but!

He sat for an instant dazed and hewildered in the dust of the departing wheels Then, as the bulk of the vehicle reap peared, already narrowing in the distance without a second thought he dashed after it His disappointment, his self-criticism, his practical resolutions were forgotten. He ad but one idea now-the vision providential! The clas to the mystery was efore him-he must follow it!

Yet he had sense enough to realize that the coach would not stop to take up a passenger between stations, and that the next station was the one three miles below Skinner's. It would not be difficult to reach this by a cut-off in time, and alcrowded, he could no doubt obtain a seat

His earner currounty, however, led him to put apurs to his horse and range up along ide of the coach, as if passing it, while be examined the stranger more closely. Her face was bent fisilessly over a book here was unmistricably the same profile that he had seen, but the full face was hirrerent in outline and expression. strange sense of disappointment that was almost a revulsion of feeling came over him, he lingered, he glanced ngain; she was certainly a very pretty woman; there was the benutifully rounded chin, the short straight nose, and delicately curved and yet-yet it was not the same face e had dreamt of. With an old provoking ense of disillusion, he swept ahead of o let it pass;

This time the fair unknown raised ber long lashes and gazed suddenly at this persistent horseman at her side, and an odd expression, it seemed to himalmost a glance of recognition and expectation, came into "I'll settle and collect from each her dark, languid eyes. The pupils con centrated upon him with a singular sig inficance—that wasalmost, he even thought, a reply to his glance—and yet it was as utterly unintelligible. A moment later however, it was explained. He had faller esitation, wonder and embarrassment when, from a wooded trail to the right said Codinson, with equal carelesaness as another horseman suddenly swept into the gathered up the money. Cept those the read before him. He was a powerfully beys from the wall-y, and they're most all built man, nearnted on a theroughbred horse of a quality far superior to the ordinary roadster. Without looking at Key be easily son affered him no receipt, and, moreover, ranged up beside the ceach as it to pass it, as he remembered that he had only Collin-bat Key with a sudden resolution put spurs son's word for the destruction of Parker's | to his own horse and ranged also abreast draft. But he merely glaused at his un-conscious host and said nothing. After a page he said in a lighter tone: "I sup-man and unmistakably convey some signal to him-a signal that to Key's fancy now out your mill. Collinson, and putting in the more convinced as the stranger, after buildings, but you see you are so far allowed it to pass him at a curve of the road and slackened his pace to permit Key to do hand the tunber away. That was the the same. Instinctively conscious that the rouble, or Pd have made you a fair stranger's object was to scrutinize or identify him, he determined to take the initiative "I don't recken to ever-sell the mill," and fixed his eyes upon him as they apsaid Collinson, simply Then observing pronched. But the stranger, who were a the look of suspicion in his companion's loose brown linen duster over clothes face, he added, gravely: "You see, I that appeared to be superior in fashion rigged up the whole thing when I ex- and material, also had part of his face and head draped by a white silk handkerchief worn under his hat, ostensibly to keep the sun and dust from his head and neck-and had the advantage of him. He only caught the flash of a pair of steel gray eyes, as the newcomer, apparently having satisfied himself, gave rein to his spirited steed and easily repassed the coach. disappearing in a cloud of dust before it. But Key had by this time reached the 'cut-off," which the stranger, if he ntended to follow the coach, either disdained or was ignorant of, and he urged his horse to its utmost speed. Even with the stranger's advantages it would be a close

race to the station.

Nevertheless, as he darhed on he was by no means insensible to the somewhat Quixotic nature of his undertaking. If was right in his suspicion that a signa had been given by the lady to the stranger it was exceedingly probable that he had discovered not only the fair inmate of the robbers' den, but one of the gang itself, or at least a confederate and afly. Yet, far from deterring him, in that ingenious sophistry with which he was apt to treat his remance, he now looked upon his adenture as a practical pursuit in the interests of law and justice. It was true that it was said that the band of road agents had been dispersed; it was a fact that there had been no spoliation of coach or teams for three weeks, but none of the depredators had ever been caught, and their booty, which was considerable, was known to be still intact. It was to the interest of the mine, his partners, and the workmen that this clue to a danger that threatener he locality should be followed to the end. As to the lady, in spite of the disappointment that still rankled in his breast, he could be magnanimous! She might be the paramour of the strange horseman; she might be only escaping from some hateful companionship by his aid. And yet one thing puzzled him; she was evidently not ac quainted with the personality of the active gang, for she had, without doubt, at first mistaken him for one of them, and after recognizing her real accomplice had

ommunicated her mistake to him. It was a great relief to him when the ough and tangled "cut -off" at last proadened and lightened into the turnpike road again, and be beheld, scarcely quarter of a mile before him, the dust cloud that overhung the coach as it drew up at the lonely wayside station. He was n time, for he knew the horses were changed here, but a sudden fear that the fair un known might alight or take some other conveyance, made him still spur his jaded steed forward. As he neared the station ne glanced eagerly around for the other horseman, but he was nowhere to be seen. He had evidently either abandoned the chase or ridden ahead.

It seemed equally a part of what he beheved was a providential intercession that on arriving at the station he found there was a vacant seat inside the coach.

he lady, and he was thus enabled to study her face as it was bent over her book, whose pages, however, she scarcely turned. After her first casual glance of curiosity at the new pasengers, she seemed to take no more notice of him, and Key began to heart. He's mighty rough on you, too, wonder if he had not mistaken her previous interrogating look. Nor was it his only disturbing query; he was conscious of the same disappointment, now that he could examine her face more attentively, as in his first cursory giance. She was cer-tainly handsome; if there was no longer the freshness of youth there was still the indefinable charm of the woman of thirty and with it the delicate lines of experienced muliebrity and repose. Some of these lines, particularly around the mouth and fringed cyclids, were deepened as by pain, and the chin, even in its rounded follness, had the single of determination. From what was visible below the brown linen "duster" that she wore, she appeared to

be tastefully although not richly dressed. As the coach at last drove away from the station a grizzled, farmer-looking man scated beside her attered a sigh of relief so palpable as to attract the general at-Turning to his fair neighbor with a smile of uncouth but good-humored

apology, he said in explanation:
"You'll excuse me, miss! I don't
know exactly how you're feefin'—for, udging from your looks and general gait, you're a stranger in these parts—but ex for me, I don't mind sayin' that I don't feel exactly safe from these yer road agents and stage robbers entil arter we pass Skinner's Station. All along thet face—if the same profile he had seen at Galloper's Ridge, R's jest tech and go ike, the woods is kwarmin' with 'em. But once pass Skinner's, you're all right. you don't mind, miss, for it's bein' in your presence, I'il jest pull off my boots and ease my feet for a spell."

Neither the singular request nor the smile t evoked on the faces of the other passenger-seemed to disturb the lady's abstraction. Scarcely lifting her eyes from her book she

lowed a grave assent. "You see, miss," he continued, "and you, gents," he added, taking the whole coach into his confidence, 'Tve got over forty ounces of clean gold dust in them boots, between the opper and lower sole, and its neighty light packing for my feet. Ye kin seft it," he said, as he removed one boot and held it up before them. "I put the dust there for safety, kalkilatin", that while best tond gentry allos goes for a man's pockets an' his body beit, they never think of his butes, or haven't time to go through em." He looked around him with a smile of self-satisfaction.

The marmur of admiring comment was, nowever, broken by a burry-bearded namer who sat in the middle seat. "That's pretty fair, as far as it goes," he said, smilingly, That I reckon it wouldn't go fur if you started to run. I've got a simpler game than that, gentiemen, and ex we're all friends here, an' the danger's over, I don't mind tellin' ve. The hist thing these veryoad agents do, after they've covered the driver with their shotgons, is to name the passen ma'am" - explanatory to the lady who berayed only a languad interest-"is to keep em from drawing their revolvers. A revolver is the last thing a road agent wants, ither in a man's hand or in his holster so I sez to myself, 'ef a six-shooter ain't of o account, wor's the use of carryin' it's So I just put my showting-iron in my value when I travel and (ii) my holster with my gold dust, so. It is a deuced sight heavier than a revolver, but they don't feel its weight, an' don't keer to come high it. And I've been helup twice on tother side of the Divide this year, and I passed free

The applicance that followed this revelation nd the exhibition of the holster not only threw the farmer's exploits into the shade but seemed to excite an emulation among the passengers. Other methods of securing the excitement communited in the leabing forward of a passenger who had up to the ntained a reserve almost equal to the fair unknown. His dress and genratappearance were those of a professional man; his voice and manner corroborated the presumption.

don't think, gentlemen," he began with a pleasant smile, "that any man of us here would like to be called a coward, but in fighting with an enemy who never atincks, or even appears, except with a deit is my opinion that a man is not only estimed in avolding an unequal encounter with him, but in circumventing by nears the object of that attack. You have all been frank in telling your methods. I will be equally so in telling mine, even if I have perhaps to confess to a little more ban you have. For I have not only availed myself of a well-known rule of the robbers who infest these mountains to exempt all women and children from their spoliationa rule which, of course, they perfectly inderstand gives them a sentimental condeferation with all Californians-but I have, I confess, also availed myself of the innocent kindness of one of that charming and justly exempted sex." He paused and bowed courteously to the fair unknown, When I entered this coach I had with me bulky parcel which was manifestly too arge for my pockets, yet as evidently too small and too valuable to be entrusted to the ordinary luggage. Seeing my difficulty, our charming companion opposite, out of the very kindness and innocence of her heart, offered to make a place for it in her satchel, which was not full. I accepted the offer joyfully. When I state to you, gentlemen, that that package contained valuable Government bondstoa considerable amount, I do so not to claim your praise for any originality of my own, but to make this public avowal to our fair fellow-passenger for accepting this most perfect security and immunity from the road agent that

has been yet recorded." With his eyes riveted on the lady's face, Key saw a faint color rise to her otherwise impassive face, which might have been called out by the enthusiastic praise that followed the lawyer's confession. But he was painfully conscious of what now seemed a monstrous situation! Here was the actual accomplice or confidante of the road agents calmly feeliving the complacent and pucific confessions of the men who were seeking to outwit them. Could be, in ordinary justice to them, to himself, or the mission he believed he was pursuing, refrain from exposing her-or warning them privately. But was be certain? Was a rague remembrance of a profile momentarily seen-and as he must even now admit, inconsistent with the full face he was gazing at-sufficient for such an accusation? More than that, was the protection she had apparently afforded the lawyer consistent with the function of an accom-

"Then if the danger's over." said the lady gently, reaching down to draw her satchel from under the seat, "I suppose I may return it to you."

"By no means! Don't trouble yourself. Pray allow me to still remain your debtorat least as far as to the next station," said the lawyer gallantly.

The lady uttered a languid sigh, sank back in her seat, and calmly settled herself to the perusal of her book. Key felt his cheeks beginning to burn with the embarrassment and shame of his evident misconception. And here he was on his way to Marysville to follow a woman for whom he felt he no longer cared, and for whose pursuit he had no longer the excuse of justice.

"Then I understand that you have twice seen these road agents," said the professional man, turning to the miner, "Of course you could be able to identify them; "Nary a man! You see they reall masked and only one of 'emever speaks."

"The leader or chief?

"The orator?" repeated the professional an in amazemen

"Well, you see, I call him the orator, for ne's mighty glib with histongue and reelsoff all he has to say like as if he had it by sometimes, for all his high-toned style. Ef he thinks a mon is hidin' anything he jest scalps him with his tongue, and blamed if I don't think he likes the chance of doin' it He's got a regular set speech, and he's bound to go through it all, even if he makes every thing wait and runs the risk of capture. Yet he ain't the chief-and even, I've heard folks say, ain't got any responsibility if he's took, for he don't tech anybody or anybody's money—and couldn't be prosecuted.

I reckon he's some sort of a broken-down awyer-d've see?" "Not much of a lawyer, I imagine," said

the professional man, smiling, "for he'll find himself quite mistaken as to his share of responsibility. But it's a rather clever way of concealing the identity of the real leader "Its the smartest gang that was ever started in the Sierras. They fooled the sheriff of Sierra the other day. They gave oim a sort of idea that they had a kind of hidin' place in the woods whar' they metand kept their boty, and, by Jinkst he goes down har' with his hull posse-just spilm' for a fight-and only lights upon a gang of innoent greenhorns who were boring for silver on the very spot where he allowed the robbers had their den! He ain't held up his lend since."

the window-betrayed neither concern nor curiosity. He let his eyes drop to the swart boot that peeped from below her They never dare go below that. So, ef gown, and the thought of his trying to identify it with the slipper he had picked up seemed to him as ridiculous as his other misconceptions. He sank back gloom-ily in his sent; by degrees the fatigue and excitement of the day began to mercifully benumb his senses, twilight had fallen and the talk had ceased; the lady had allowed her book to drop in her lap as the darkness gathered, and had closed her yes; he closed his own, and slipped away presently into a dream in which he saw the profile again as he had seen it in the darkness of the hollow, only that this time changed to a full face unlike the lady's or any one he had ever seen. Then the window seemed to open with a rattle and be again felt the cool odors of the forest, or he awoke to find that the lady had nly opened her window for a breath of fresh air. It was nearly 8 o'clock: it would be an hour yet beforethe coach stopped at the next station for supper; the passengers Were fell into a deep sleep, from which he awoke

CHAPTER IV.

'It can't be Three Pines yet," said : assenger's voice, in which the laziness of kep still impered, "or else we've snoezed over five noie. I don't see no lights; wot are we stoppin' for?" The other pasrogers struggled to an apright position, me nearest the window opened it; its place was instantly occupied by the double reuzzle of a shorgen! No one moved. In the awe-stricken silence the voice of the iver rose in drawling protestation

"It t'ain't no business o' mine, but it orter strikes me that you chaps a playin' t just a little too fine this time! It ain't three miles from Three Pine Station. and forty men! Of course that's your

look out-not mine."

The audacity of the thing had evidently struck even the usually taciturn and phiegmatic driver into his first expostulation

in record. 'Your thoughtful consideration does you great credit." said a voice from the dark-bess, "and shall be properly presented to our manager, but at the same time we wish it understood that we do not besinate to take any risks in strict attention to our business and our clients. In the meantime, you will expedite matters and give your assengers a chance to get an early ten at Three Pines by handing down that trensurebox and mail ponch. He careful in handling hat blunderbass you keep beside it; the last time it unfortunately went off, and I regret to say slightly wounded one of your passen-Accidents of this kind, interfering, as of our chance meetings, cannot be too highly deplored."

"By gosh!" elaculated an outside passen ger in an audible whisper.
"Thank you, sir," said the voice quietly,

but as I overlooked you, I will trouble you now to descend wit hthe others."

The voice moved nearer, and by the light f a flaming buil's eye cast upon the coach it could be seen to come from a stout, medium-sized man with a black mask, which, however, showed half of a smooth, month. The speaker cleared his throat with the slight preparatory cough of the practiced orator, and, approaching the window, to Key's intense surprise, actually began in the identical, professional and thetorical

style previously indicated by the miner.
"Circumstances over which we have no ontrol, gentlemen, compel us to oblige you to alight, stand in a row on one side, and hold up your hands. You will find the attitude not unpleasant after your cramped position in the coach, while the change from its confined air to the wholesome night breeze of the Sierras can not bet prove salutary and refreshing. It will also enable us to relieve you of such so-called valuables and treasures in the way of gold dust and coin which. I regret to say, tooften are misapplied in careless hands, and which the teachings of the highest morality distinctly denounce as the root of all evil! I need not inform you, gentlemen, as business men, that promptitude and celerity of compliance will insure despatch and shorten an interview which has been some times needlessly and, I regret to say, pain-

fully protracted." He drew back deliberately with the same monotonous precision of habit, and dis-closed the muzzles of his confederates' weapons still levelled at the passengers. In spite of their astonishment, indignation and discomfiture, his practiced effrontery and deliberate display appeared in so way to touch their humorous sense, and one or two smiled bysterically as they rose and hesitatingly filed out of the vehicle It is possible, however, that the levelled shotguns contributed more or less directly

Two masks began to search the passen gers under the combined focus of the bull's-eyes, the shining gun barreis, and a running but still carefully prepared commentary from the spokesman: "It is to be regretted that business men, instead of intrusting their property to the custody of the regularly constituted express agent. still continue to secrete it on their persons, a custom that, without enhancing its security, is not only an injustice to the express company, but a great detriment to despatch. We also wish to point out that while we do not as a rule interfere with the possession of articles of ordinary personal use or adornment, such as simple jewelry or watches, we reserve our right to restrict by confiscation the vulgarity nd unmanliness of diamonds and enormous fob chains."

The act of spoliation was apparently complete, yet it was evident that the orator was restraining himself for a more effective climax. Clearing his throat again and stepping before the impatient but still mystified file of passengers, he reviewed them gravely. Then, in a perfeetly pitched tone of mingled pain and apology, he said slowly:

"It would seem that, from no wish of our own, we are obliged on this present casion to suspend one or two of our usual We are not to 900 habit of interfering with the "scaring appared of our esteemed cliebtes, but in the interests of ordinary homeanity, we are obliged to pressman to check the "lady's" trunk to San 6 30 to 8 p m., Sunday, 4 to 7 p m.

remove the boots of the gentleman on the great pain and impede his locomotion. We also seldom deviate from our rule of make an exception in favor of the gentleman next to him, and permit him to hand us the altogether too heavily weighted holster which presses upon his hip. Gen-tlement" said the orator, slightly raising his voice with a deprecating gesture, "you need not be alarmed! The indigpant movement of our friend just now was not to draw his revolver-for it isn't there! He paused while his companions speedily removed the farmer's boots and the miner's holster, and with a still more apologetic air, approached he coach where only the lady remained erect and rigid in her corner. "And now," he said, with simulated hesitation, "we ome to the last and to us the most painful. suspension of our rules. On these very rare occasions when we have been honored with the presence of the fair sex, it has been our invariable custom not only to leave them in undisturbed possession of their property, but even of their privacy as well. It is with deep regret that on this occasion we are obliged to make an exreption. For in the present instance the indy out of the gentleness of her heart and the politeness of her sex has burdened herself not only with the weight but the responsibility of a package forced n her by one of the passengers. scandalous and unmanly an attempt to evade our rules and violate the sanctity of the indy's immunity will never be permitted. For your own sake, madam, we are compelled to ask you for the satchel under your seat. It will be returned to

you when the package is removed." "One moment." said the professionalan, indignantly, "there is a man here whom you have spared—a man who lately joined us. Is that man," pointing to the astonished Key, "one of your confeder-

"Thatman," returned the spokesman with a laugh," is the owner of the Sylvan Hollow Mine. We have spared him became we owe him some consideration for having been turned out of his house at dead of night while the sheriff of Sierras was seeking us He stopped, and then in an entirely different voice and in a totally changed manner, you hear the signal, and by God you'll know what next.

the light of a solitary bull's eye-the holder hinself invisible-still showed the muzzles of the guns covering the driver. There was a momentary stir of voices within the closed coach, but an angry rear of "Silence" rom the darkness husbed it

The moments crept slowly by All now ere breathless. Then a clear whistle rang from the distance, the light suddealy was extinguished, the leve zies vanished with it, the driver's fash feli simultaneously on the backs of his borses, and the coach leaped forward.

The jolt nearly threw Key from the top, but a moment later it was still more difficult to keep his seat in the headlong fury of their progress. Again and again the lash descended upon the maddened borses, until the whole coach seemed to leap, bound, and swerve with every stroke. Cries of protest and even discress began to come from the interior, but the driver heeded it not. A window was subjenly let down, the voice of the professional man saying "What's the matter? We're not followed. You are imperilling our lives by this speed," was answered only by "Will some of ye through that fool?" from the driver and the renewed fall of the The wayside trees appeared a solid plateau between them, opened, danced at their side, closed up again behind there, but still they sped along. Rushing down grades with the speed of an avalanche they ascended again without drawing rein, and as if by sheer momentum, for the heavy vehicle now seemed to have a diabolical energy of its own. It ground scartered they do, with the harmony and pleasure rocks to powder with its crushing wheels, it swayed beavily on theidish corners, re-covering itself with the resultess forward strong and dogstann that they seemed to atstrip even the speed of the unbated cartle. Lesser lights were presently seen nning to and fro and on the outer fringe of the settlement the stage pulled up before a crowd of wondering faces and

the driver spoke: "We've been held up on the open road not three niles from what ye men are sittin' here yawpin'! If thar's a man among ye that hasn't got the soul of a skunk, he'll foller and close in upon 'em afore they have a chance to get into the brush." Having thus relieved himself of his duty as an enforced non-combatant, and allowed all further responsibility to devolve upon his recreant fellow employes, he relapsed into his usual taciturnity and drove a trifle less recklessly to the station, where he grimly set down his bruised and discomfited passengers. As Key mingled with them be could not help perceiving that neither the late "orator's" explanation of his exemption from their fate nor the driver's surly corroboration of his respectability had pacified them. For a time this amused him, particularly as he could not help remembering that he first appeared to them beside the nivsterious horseman whom some one thought had been identified as one of the masks. But he was not a little piqued to find that the fair unknown appeared to participate in their feelings, and his first civility to her met with a chilling response. Even then, in the general distillusion of his remance regarding her, this would have been only a momentary annoyance; but it strangely revived all his previous suspicions and set him to thinking. Was the singular sugacity displayed by theorator in hissearch purely intuitive? Could any one have disclosed to him the secret of the passengers' hoards? Was it possible for her while sitting alone in the coach to have communicated with the band? Suddenly the remembrance flashed across him of her opening the window for fresh air! She could have easily then dropped some signal. If this were so, and she really was the culprit, it was quite natural forher ownsufety that she should encourage the passengers in their absurd suspicion of himself! His dying interest revived; a few moments ago he had half resolved to abandon his quest and turn back at Three Pines. Now he determined to follow her to the end. But he did not indulge in any further sophistry regarding his duty, yet, in a new sense of honor, he did not dream of retaliating upon her by communicating his suspicions to his fellow passengers. When the coach started again he took his seat on the top and rema there until they reached Jamestown in the early evening. Here a number of his despoiled companions were obliged to wait to communicate with their friends. Happily the exemption that had made them indignant enabled him to continue his journey with a full purse. But he was content with a modest surveillance of the lady from the op of the coach. On arriving at Stockton this surveillance

became less easy. It was the terminus of the stage route and the divergence of others by boat and rail. If he were lucky enough to discover which one the lady took. his presence now would be more marked and might excite her suspicion. cumstance, which he also believed providential, determined him. As the

Luis. Key was seized with an idea which extreme left, which evidently give him great pain and impede his locomotion involved a risk of losing the clue entirely. There were two routes to San Luis, one was obliging our clients to hold up their hands by stage and direct, though slower; the during this examination, but we giadly other by steamboat and rail, via San Fraqciaco. If he took the boat there was less danger of her discovering him, even if she chose the same conveyance; if she took the direct stage-and he trusted to a woman's avoidance of the hurry of change and transhipment for that choice—he would still arrive at San Luis, via San Francisco, an hour before her. He resolved to take the boat; a careful scrutiny from a stateroom window of the arriving possengers on the gangplank, satisfied him that she had preferred the stage. There was still the escape him, but the risk seemed small. And a trifling circumstance had almost uncon-sciously influenced him, after his romantic and superstitious fashion, as to this final step. He had been singularly payed when he heard that San Lors was the lady's proba-

ble destination. It did not seem to bear any relation to the mountain wilderness and the wild life she had just quitted; it was anparently the most antipathic, incongruous, and inconsistent refuge she could have taken. It offered no opportunity for the disposal of booty, or for communication with and monastery college in a sleepy pastoral plain-it had even retained its Old feel, and we believe, gentlemen, that flavor smid American improvements and most of you will agree with us that so social revolution. He knew it well. social revolution. He knew it well.
From the quaint college clusters where
the only reposeful years of his adventurous
youth had been spent, to the long Almeda or double avenues of ancient trees which connected it with the convent of Santa Luisa, and some of his youthful "devotions," it had been the nursery of his romance. He was amosed at what seemed to be the frony of fate in new linking it with this folly of his maturer monhood. and yet he was eneasily conscious of being more seriously affected by it. And it was with a greater anxiety than this adventure had ever yet cost him, that he at last arrived at the San Jose Hotel, and from a halcony comer awaited the coming of the coacts. His heart heat rapidly as it anside as she descended from the couch was the mysterious horseman of the Sierra, road. Key could not mistake the wellyou, quick! And you, sir —to Key—"I'd been about the features, which had been about the features, which had been about the features, which had been about the features which had been about the features. across him again the fatefulness of the in-spiration which had decided him not to go He stepped back and seemed to be in-stantly swallowed up in the darkness, bar estopped this convincing denominant. It was quite possible that her companion, by relays of horses and the advantage of bridle cutoffs, could have easily followed the Three Pine couch and joined her at Stockton. But for what purpose? The indy's trunk, which had not been disturbed during the first part of the journey, and had been forwarded to Stockton untouched before Key's eyes, could not have contained booty to be disposed of in this forgotten old town.

The register of the hotel bore simply the name of "Mrs. Chivers," of Stockton, but no record of her companion, who seemed to have disappeared as mysteriously as he came. That she occupied a sitting-room on the same floor as his own-in which the was apparently excluded during the rest of the day-was all he knew. Nobody elsa scemed to know her. Key feit an odd agitation, that might have been the resait of some vague fear of implicating her premaintely, in making any marked inquiry or imperiling his secret by the bribed explonage of servants. Once when he was assing her door he heard the sounds of laughter-albeit innocent and heart free-which seemed so inconsistent with the gravity of the situation and his own thoughts, that he was strangely shocked But he was still more disturbed by a later occurrence. In his watchfulness of the movements of his neighbor he had been equally careful of his own, and had not sly refrained from registering his name, but had enjoined secrecy upon the landlord, whom he knew Yet the next morning after his arrival, the porter not at his bell promptly enough, he so far forgot himself as to walk to the staurcase, which was near the lady's room, and call to the lights of Three Pine Station began to | employe over the balustrade. As he was glitter through the trees. Then a succession of yells broke from the driver, so creak of a door and a singular magnetic consciousness of being averlooked caused him to turn slowly, but only in time to hear the rustle of a withdrawing skirt as the door was quickly closed. In an instant be felt the full force of his fo but it was too late. Had the mysterious fugitive recognized him? their eyes had not met and his face had

> He varied his espionage by subterfuges which his knowledge of the old town made easy. He watched the door of the little hunself unseen, from the windows of a hil-hard saloon opposite, which he had frequented in former days. Yet he was surprised the same afternoon to see her, from his coign of variage, re-entering the hotel, where he was sure he had left her a few moments ago. Had she gone out by some other exit-or had she been disguised? But on entering his room that evening he was him as convincing of her identity as it was audacious. Lying on his pillaw were a few dead feaves of an oderous mountain fern known only to the Sierras. They were tied together by a narrow blue ribbon and had evidently been intended to attract his attention. As betook them in his hand the distinguishing subtle aroma of the little sylvan hollow in the hills came to a memory and a revelation! He summoned the chambermaid; she knew nothing of them, or, indeed, of anyone who had entered his room. He walked cautiously into the hall; the indy's sitting-room door was open; the room was empty. The accupant, said the chamberman, "hast left that aftermoon." He held the proof of her iden-tity in his hand, but she berself had vanished! That she had recognized him there was now no doubt. Had she divined the real object of his quest, or had she accepted it as a mere sentimental gallantry at the moment when she knew it was hopeless and she herself was perfectly safe from pursuit? In either event he had been duped. He did not know whether to be piqued, angry-or relieved of his irresolute quest.

To Be Continued ---

Killed by a Bureau

Plainfield, N. J., Aug. 24.-While assisting to carry a bureau up stairs in the Crescent Hotel, North Plainfield, last night, Albert Taylor lost his balance and fell down the flight of steps. The bureau tumbled down after him and struck and crushed in his chest. He lived but a short



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